

Festival and Events Working Party
Notes of Meeting, Wednesday 19 June 2019, 1200
Exmouth Town Council Meeting Room

Attendees

JW	Joy Whipps	Councillor/Chair	Exmouth Town Council
AB	Aurora Bailey	Councillor	Exmouth Town Council
FC	Frank Cullis	Councillor	Exmouth Town Council
OD	Olly Davey	Councillor	Exmouth Town Council
LB	Lisa Bowman	Town Clerk	Exmouth Town Council
CJ	Chetna Jones	Deputy Town Clerk	Exmouth Town Council
NS	Natasha Smart	Note-taker	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

CN	Cherry Nicholas	Councillor	Exmouth Town Council
AS	Alex Sadiq	Councillor	Exmouth Town Council
CH	Carla Hiley	Arts Manager	Exmouth Town Council
TH	Trevor Huggons	Steward	Exmouth Festival

Election of Chair

1. FC proposed, seconded by OD, that Councillor Joy Whipps be elected as Chair of the Festival and Events Working Party.

Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

2. JW welcomed working party members and reviewed apologies.

Terms of Reference

3. The working party noted the Terms of Reference. LB highlighted the fact that the Festival and Events Working Party is one of the few working parties which has delegated financial authority, with key responsibilities being to deliver the Exmouth Festival and other community events. The budget is agreed at the start of the year and, as long as it is not exceeded, the working party has the authority to use the budget to progress the planned events as it sees fit.

Notes of Meeting of 14 March 2019

4. LB briefly summarised the notes from the last meeting and provided relevant updates:
 - **Christmas on The Strand:** Strand businessowners George Nightingale (GN) and Oliver Bainbridge (OB) had put forward a proposal for a 3-week programme of marquee-based events in The Strand leading up to New Year's Eve. The action was on GN to provide a more comprehensive proposal to go to Full Council, however LB was unsure whether he still wanted to proceed so this proposal has been deferred;
 - **Christmas Fayre/Lantern Parade:** Currently planned for 7 December 2019;
 - **Marina Festival:** Currently planned for 1 September 2019 along the lines of the previous Mussel Festivals, but taking place in the Marina area rather than the seafront;
 - **Art Trail:** The working party had agreed to support the new Exmouth Art Trail with its initial printing costs.

OD took the opportunity to declare that he has a personal interest in the Exmouth Festival since he was paid to appear as one of the performers, which the working party noted. There were no other comments about the previous meeting notes.

Update on Exmouth Festival 2019

5. LB summarised that she viewed the 2019 Festival as a very successful event and a huge achievement, not least bearing in mind the Town Council budget was a relatively small £17,000 for a high-calibre event costing c£80,000. LB explained that Arts Manager CH builds up the budget through sponsorship and stall incomes etc, before finally adding in the bucket contributions at the event. These amounted to just under £14,000 this year, which was slightly less than 2018 when the weather had been better. Final costings will be available shortly and shared at a future meeting. LB estimated that, aside from some extra unplanned security costs, the 2019 Festival will have been delivered to budget.

6. Members raised questions about various aspects of the Festival; key points from the discussion are as follows:

- **Feedback:** LB explained that there had been lots of feedback following the Festival, both positive and negative (the latter on social media in particular, which focused on teenage anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking). LB commented that there is anti-social behaviour going on all the time in town, but that when the Festival is on it highlights this sort of behaviour and creates bad press for the Festival by association;
- **Attendee Numbers:** The Festival attracted large numbers of teenagers, which was attributed to the fact that it is free and that Exmouth is so accessible because of the train line. LB explained that the Festival team plans for maximum attendee numbers at any one time to be 5,000 and follows The Purple Guide to event management, which advises on health, safety and welfare standards. Exact attendee numbers are not known, so one of the risk mitigation points suggested by the police following this year's Festival was to click attendees in and out to get a better gauge of attendee numbers;
- **Police Presence:** LB explained that there was a high police presence on the Friday night focused at Exmouth railway station in a targeted campaign mounted jointly with British Transport Police. There was also a large police presence in town on the Monday evening due to train cancellations and the public being unable to disperse easily. There is no obligation on police to send a certain number of officers to police the Festival/town, and as it covers a bank holiday it is at a time when police are already stretched. LB clarified that ETC does not pay for policing of the Festival (which would cost £70 per hour per police officer if the Festival was classed as a commercial, profit-making event); instead ETC employs a dedicated security team;
- **Police Feedback:** The Festival team had a meeting with local police in the week following the event. Police were very supportive of the event (including how well the ETC team handled lost children) and stated that there had only been 16 reported crimes relating to the four days of the Festival, which they viewed as low for a festival of that size. They commented that some of the incidents recorded involved known troublemakers from Exmouth and Exeter. Police provided ideas for mitigating some of the security-related issues, which CH will take on board, such as: clicking attendees in and out; fencing the

whole site; and charging or restricting access for the headline acts in the evenings;

- **Safety Advisory Group (SAG):** CH attended a meeting of the group, which had picked up on a lot of the more negative social media coverage, but which again provided ideas for mitigating issues in future, which CH will take on board;
- **ETC Staff Responsibility:** LB wanted to highlight to members that the ETC staff involved in the Festival carry a heavy responsibility for the safety of attendees. One of the roles of the working party should be to work out how to mitigate this, which includes ensuring the budget is appropriate to the level of security and safety measures required;
- **Members' Comments/Feedback:** These included (from members' own observations as well as those received from others): positive feedback on the overall programme and the sound quality; request for more stalls (non-food); concerns about performers swearing; concerns from participants/activities who had not been included in the brochure (eg art/ceramics events). In response to some of the comments, LB explained that some acts/events were programmed quite late, hence were not included in the brochure as it would have already gone to print. In respect of performers swearing, LB commented that the more adult acts had been programmed after the 9pm watershed and members agreed that this was an acceptable risk;
- **Volunteer Wash-Up:** CJ shared that she is organising a wash-up and thank you event for volunteers, likely to take place on 18 July.

ACTION: CH to revert with full Festival 2019 costings at future meeting

Thoughts on Exmouth Festival 2020

7. LB explained that ETC will now be taking on board feedback and lessons learned from this year to help plan for next year's Festival. The focus will be on mitigating the risk of anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking, as well as safeguarding minors. FC made the point that the focus should be on countering teenage anti-social behaviour and not be distracted by the issue of under-age drinking and searching minors for alcohol, although members acknowledged that searching acted as a useful deterrent, not just for alcohol but also for illegal items. LB concluded that CH would revert at a future meeting with full costings for this year's event plus thoughts on mitigating security issues next year.

Marina/Mussel/Sea Festival

8. CJ explained that 1 September is currently planned for a seafood festival, which will be held mainly in the car park on the Camperdown Terrace side of the Marina development, as well as the walkways and the area near The Point. Members agreed that publicity and signage would be key. LB explained that there is an events budget of £10,000 available. CH is working on the programme and will revert at the next meeting.

ACTION: CH to revert with further details/programme at next meeting

Christmas Fayre

9. CJ explained that the Fayre is currently scheduled for Saturday 7 December in The Strand. In 2018 the day started with the 8 local primary schools decorating

Christmas trees in the morning, a day-time market with a variety of (mainly charity) stalls and a schools' Lantern Parade in the early evening, accompanied by a stage with local choirs performing throughout. LB explained the background to the decision to hold a daytime-only event in 2018, largely brought about due to having had to cancel a previous Christmas Cracker because of poor weather, which resulted in ETC losing money. As previous events had cost around £20,000, this raised concerns from councillors about the proportionality of spending that amount of money (and the risk of making a loss) on a one-day event. There are further complications due to the event being held in The Strand, with fixed traders complaining about the potential loss to their businesses. In addition, charity stalls are keen to be involved, but do not want an event to go beyond mid-afternoon (and their stall offerings are generally less appealing), whereas business stalls are happy to be involved in an event going on into the evening, but to make it worthwhile for them there needs to be more entertainment to attract crowds, which makes the event more costly. Any event needing lighting would also attract more costs. LB therefore sought a steer on how councillors would like to proceed with a 2019 Christmas event.

10. After some discussion about different options and implications, councillors agreed that they would like a more atmospheric, 'Christmassy' event, starting later in the day and continuing into the evening and using both additional Christmas lighting and existing Strand seating lighting. This would tie in better with the Christmas tree lights switch-on, the Lantern Parade (as well as the Deaf Academy's Santa Sizzler firewalk event due to take place the same evening). LB agreed to check costs for stall and stage lighting from Sound Events to give an idea of what this would cost, and CJ agreed to touch base with the Deaf Academy to check there would be no conflict with their event, as well as the local primary schools re the Lantern Parade. Once the outline for the event is agreed, ETC would start looking at advertising/booking stalls and choirs asap.

ACTION: LB and CJ to revert with costings/further details at next meeting

Any Other Business

10. No other matters raised.

Date of Next Meeting

11. Thursday 4 July 2019 at 1400 (tbc).